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MR. *KENDAL*'S

SERMON

AT THE

ORDINATION

OF THE

Rev. Thaddeus Mason Harris.

THE INSPIRED SCRIPTURE AN ADEQUATE RULE OF FAITH AND PRACTICE, ILLUSTRATED IN

A

SERMON,

PREACHED *OCTOBER* 23, 1793,

AT THE

ORDINATION

OF

MR. THADDEUS MASON HARRIS,

TO THE PASTORAL CARE OF THE CHURCH AND CHRISTIAN SOCIETY IN

DORCHESTER.

BY SAMUEL KENDAL, A. M.

PASTOR OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH AND SOCIETY IN *WESTON.*

Printed at the Apollo Press, *in* BOSTON,

BY BELKNAP AND HALL,

No. 8, DOCK SQUARE.—1794.

Dupl. in 54 box. 13

American Statistical Assoc.
Mar. 31, 1899.

DEDICATION.

To the Reverend THADDEUS MASON HARRIS, *at whose desire the following Discourse was preached; and to the respectable* CHURCH *of* CHRIST *in* Dorchester *under his* pastoral *care, at whose particular request, and expense, it is published; with fervent prayers to the* FATHER *of mercies for their prosperity and happiness, and for their mutual joy and comfort, in their present connexion; it is now humbly and affectionately dedicated by*

THE AUTHOR.

AN ORDINATION SERMON.

2 TIMOTHY iii. 16, 17.

ALL SCRIPTURE IS GIVEN BY INSPIRATION OF GOD, AND IS PROFITABLE FOR DOCTRINE, FOR REPROOF, FOR CORRECTION, FOR INSTRUCTION IN RIGHTEOUSNESS; THAT THE MAN OF GOD MAY BE PERFECT, THROUGHLY FURNISHED UNTO ALL GOOD WORKS.

THE Apoſtle Paul, in his epiſtles to Timothy and Titus, hath conciſely deſcribed the character and qualifications of a goſpel miniſter; and pointed out the principal duties of his office.

Sincerity, *faithfulneſs*, and *ability to teach*, are leading traits in the character, and neceſſary qualifications, of a *goſpel biſhop*. All others are, perhaps, comprehended in theſe. He, who poſſeſſes theſe, cannot be a ſtranger to the tranſforming power of the religion which he preaches. He muſt be actuated by right motives; by love to the Redeemer and to the ſouls of men; and will be diligent in his exertions to fulfil his miniſtry, and to accompliſh the benevolent deſign of the inſtitution.

Good natural and acquired abilities, as well as experimental knowledge, are neceſſary, in order that he may be qualified to teach others the ſublime truths, doctrines, and duties, of religion. His duty is, among other things, to *inſtruct*, *reprove*, *rebuke*, *warn*, *exhort*, and "in Chriſt's ſtead," to *perſuade* ſinners to be *reconciled unto God*. That he may be ſucceſsful, and ſhew himſelf to be worthy of the ſacred office, he muſt be *an example of the believer in word, in converſation, in charity, in ſpirit, in faith, in purity*; and muſt "take heed to his doctrine, that it be according to godlineſs;" of a practical tendency; and "ſhew uncorruptneſs, gravity, ſincerity."

He muſt not amuſe himſelf, nor his hearers, with "fooliſh and unlearned queſtions, fables, and commandments of men, which turn from the truth;" but deliver the meſſages of heaven; the doctrines contained in the *divinely inſpired ſcripture*. His heart and life muſt accord with the precepts and purity of the goſpel, and be governed by the examples of his bleſſed maſter; and all his powers muſt be exerted to promote the glory of God in the ſalvation of ſinners; to advance the Redeemer's cauſe and kingdom in the world.

This, as it was the gracious deſign of Chriſt in inſtituting the goſpel miniſtry; ſo it is the prime object of every faithful miniſter. Thoſe, who take upon themſelves this office, depart from the original deſign of it, when they are chiefly actuated by any other motive, than a view to the glory of God and to the good of men.

This was the chief motive by which the firſt miniſters of Chriſt were actuated. St. Paul, in particular, hath furniſhed us with an example of the pureſt zeal, faithfulneſs, and conſtancy, in his labors to promote the honor of his maſter and the ſalvation of ſinners. And he endeavoured to inſpire Timothy, "his own ſon in the faith," with a like zeal and fidelity in the work of the miniſtry.

In his ſecond epiſtle to this young *evangeliſt*, after advertiſing him of the ſufferings which he might expect to experience in the cauſe of Chriſt; and of the apoſtacy and declenſion which then began to appear in the church, and which, probably, were to be attributed to their "receiving for doctrines the commandments of men;" he exhorted him to "continue in the things which he had learned, and been aſſured of, knowing of whom he had learned them; and that from a child he had known the holy ſcriptures, which were able to make him wiſe unto ſalvation, through faith which is in Chriſt Jeſus."

By "the things which he had learned, and been aſſured of," the apoſtle, doubtleſs, intended the great doctrines and duties of chriſtianity; in which he knew Timothy had been well inſtructed. And, that Timothy might view the holy ſcriptures in their juſt importance, pay a ſacred regard to their authority, and conſider them as an *adequate rule* of faith and practice, abundantly ſufficient *to furniſh the man of God*, or miniſter of Chriſt, with a competent knowledge of the doctrines and duties of chriſtianity, for the faithful and ſucceſsful diſcharge of his

office, the apoſtle introduced the words of our text: "All ſcripture is given by inſpiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for inſtruction in righteouſneſs; that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furniſhed unto all good works."

It may be worthy of particular notice, that the apoſtle, after deſcribing the character, and pointing out the neceſſary qualifications, of a miniſter, which ſhow that he muſt be a man of real religion, *ſincere*, *faithful*, *able*, and *apt to teach*, directed him to the *divinely inſpired ſcripture*, as the ſtandard of truth, the fountain of doctrinal knowledge, and the rule of miniſterial duty.

This divine ſtandard of religious truth and rule of faith and practice, as the *polar ſtar* in the chriſtian ſyſtem, is to regulate the ſentiments, the faith, and the conduct of both miniſter and people. It is adapted to the ſtate and capacity of mankind in general; and was given for their "inſtruction in righteouſneſs;" for their improvement and perfection in faith, knowledge, and chriſtian virtue.

But the text, however extenſive in its deſign and general in its application, I conceive, is peculiarly well adapted to the preſent occaſion; and worthy of the ſerious attention of thoſe, who ſuſtain, or are about to take upon themſelves, the paſtoral office.

In purſuing the ſubject it may be proper,

I. To make a few remarks upon the divine inſpiration of the ſcripture.

We ſhall not labor to prove, that the ſcriptures contain a revelation from heaven. This

we may take for granted, on an occaſion, like the preſent, when we are, in the moſt public manner, teſtifying our belief in divine revelation, and acting under its authority.

But it may be a queſtion, whether we are to conſider *every* part of the bible as *given by inſpiration of God*, and the expreſſions of it dictated by the Holy Ghoſt.

Not to decide upon this point, it is obvious to remark, that the text, as it ſtands in the *original*, admits of this conſtruction: *All ſcripture given by inſpiration of God*, or *the whole divinely inſpired ſcripture, is profitable for doctrine*,* &c. This interpretation, which men of candor and critical knowledge, allow to be agreeable to the original, will remove thoſe difficulties, which ariſe in the mind, from the one given in our tranſlation.

* Dr. Doddridge, in a note upon the text, ſays, "Grotius tranſlates the words, *the whole divinely inſpired ſcripture is profitable*, &c." and does himſelf allow that they will bear this conſtruction; though he thinks they are rendered more *literally* in our tranſlation. In "an illuſtration of the New Teſtament by notes and explications, printed for R. Goadby," the author inſiſts that the interpretation above given is the true ſenſe of the paſſage. He ſays, "It is to be noted that our Tranſlators here ſupplied the verb *is*, which greatly alters the ſenſe here; and when that happens to be the caſe, no word ought by any means to be ſupplied; for the greateſt errors may be built upon the ſcriptures by this means. The true rendering of the words here is; *All ſcripture given by inſpiration of God* (or *divinely inſpired*) *is profitable for doctrine*, &c. For the word AND is not found in the MS. called *Barb.* I. nor in Clemens of Alexandria, nor in the Vulgar, Syriac, and Arabic verſions, nor in Ambroſe; nor in the Scholiaſt, which goes under the name of Jerome; nor in Theodorus Mopſuenſis, nor in Pelagius and others." If we admit that the word AND was not originally in the text, the natural conſtruction is, *All ſcripture given by inſpiration of God is profitable*, &c. which is a very different thing, from ſaying that *all ſcripture* IS *given by inſpiration of God*, and according to which the apoſtle's words are as applicable to the inſpired part of the *New*, as to any part of the *Old Teſtament*, to which he is thought to have had particular reference.

Learned and ſerious chriſtians have ſuppoſed, that by inſiſting upon the divine inſpiration of every part of our ſcriptures, and that the expreſſions were dictated by the Holy Ghoſt, we leſſen the credibility of revelation. To preſerve the purity of revelation thus given, the tranſlators muſt be guided by the ſpirit of inſpiration; otherwiſe the language of the Holy Ghoſt will be changed into the language of men. Beſides, it is conceived that the knowledge and communication of many facts recorded in ſcripture did not require inſpiration; and, therefore, that it would not reflect any honor on God to ſay they were given by inſpiration.

Not to determine any queſtion about ſpurious books; or interpolated paſſages in thoſe which are genuine, and *given by inſpiration of God;* it is evident that many parts of ſcripture are mere matters of record: in the writing of which the truth might be preſerved without any extraordinary agency of the ſpirit of God. Other parts are to be conſidered as a faithful and true hiſtory of revelation, which the ſeveral writers gave, probably, in their own language.*

* "The penmen of the ſacred ſcriptures," ſays Auguſtinus, "wrote ſome things as they were *men* with hiſtorical care and diligence; other things they wrote as *prophets* by inſpiration from God: the former for the bettering of knowledge, the latter for the confirming of religion. This then may ſatisfy us that *all* that was written by the prophets, and even by thoſe holy men, who were authors of ſome part of the bible, was not divine; becauſe they wrote ſome things not as inſpired perſons, but as more hiſtorians."

Auguſtinus de civitate Dei, Lib. 18, *chap.* 38.

Dr. Benſon, in "an eſſay concerning inſpiration," has nearly the ſame idea. St. Mark and St. Luke, he ſuppoſes, did not write "by immediate *inſpiration*," but from that knowledge of facts, which they had otherwiſe obtained; and that their writings were examined and approved by St. Peter, Paul, and other *inſpired apoſtles*; and are, therefore, ſtamped with apoſtolic authority.

Whether the expreſſions of thoſe, who wrote by inſpiration, were, *generally*, dictated by the Holy Ghoſt, is a queſtion.

The great difference of ſtyle uſed by the ſeveral writers, when treating upon the ſame ſubjects, is thought to favor the opinion, that they were left to dreſs and communicate divinely revealed truths in their own language, and to reaſon upon them in their own way. Againſt this opinion it may be alleged, that St. Paul, alluding to the truths of which he had received the knowledge by revelation, or inſpiration, ſays 1 Cor. ii. 13. "Which things alſo we ſpeak, not in the words which *man's* wiſdom teacheth, but which the *Holy Ghoſt* teacheth;" and that St. Peter ſays "holy men of God ſpake as they were moved by the *Holy Ghoſt*."

On the other hand in may be ſaid, that the apoſtle Paul gives notice, in ſome inſtances, that he ſpeaks of himſelf, and not from the Lord.*

It would be too aſſuming in me to pretend to determine how far the language and expreſſions of ſcripture were dictated by the Holy

* "As to the apoſtles themſelves," the laſt mentioned author ſuppoſes that by *inſpiration* they had a complete knowledge of the chriſtian ſyſtem, and ſays, "Whenever they ſpoke or wrote concerning *chriſtianity*, that *fund of revelation* kept them right. But they were *reaſonable creatures*, as well as *inſpired apoſtles*; and, therefore, could ſpeak, or write about common affairs, as men, that have the uſe of their reaſon, without any *inſpiration*, can eaſily do. St. Paul therefore, without any *inſpiration* could give ſuch a direction, as this to *Timothy*, viz. *to mix a little wine with the water which he drank*," &c. After mentioning a number of ſimilar inſtances, he adds, "this account of the matter is not mine, but St. Paul's. 1 Cor. vii. 10. *This* (ſays he) *the Lord commandeth: and not I.* And ver. 12. *But to the reſt ſpeak I; not the Lord*," &c.

Benſon's paraphraſe and notes, &c. vol. I. page 327.

Ghoſt. The certainty, perfection, and authority of revelation, do not, perhaps, depend on any deciſion which may be had upon this point. All believers in the inſpiration of ſcripture will readily grant, that ſome of the writers of the New Teſtament, at leaſt, were miraculouſly endued with the gift of tongues, or languages, and that all were every way well qualified to communicate to the world the knowledge of truths revealed from heaven.

Although theſe truths might not, in general, be expreſſed in words "which the Holy Ghoſt teacheth;" yet we muſt ſuppoſe that the ſacred hiſtorians were ſo far under the ſpecial direction of heaven as to be preſerved from every error which might materially affect the ſyſtem of religion which they were employed to publiſh to the world.

It may be conſidered as the height of abſurdity, to ſuppoſe that God deſigned to make a revelation of his will to men, and to introduce among them a new ſyſtem of religion; and yet that He choſe and employed improper inſtruments to effect his own purpoſe.

Such an idea does not reflect any great honor upon Chriſt, the glorious *Head* of the church, who commiſſioned the apoſtles to go and teach a doctrine which he ſaid was not *his*, but the *Father's*, who had ſent him into the world.

Whatever different ſentiments may be entertained upon the ſubject of revelation, thoſe, who believe the ſcriptures to *be* a revelation of God's will, ſhould be cautious that they do not enervate their force and leſſen their authority, by ranking them with, or reducing them be-

low, merely human compoſition. They evidently have the ſeal of heaven affixed on them; they have the *indelible* marks of *divine inſpiration*; and they were given in a way, and are in themſelves, moſt wiſely and happily adapted to the ſtate of mankind.

The deſign of revelation is, to inform the human mind, and to communicate truths which unaſſiſted reaſon could never have diſcovered. It muſt, therefore, be addreſſed to the underſtanding of mankind; and the contents of it be received *only* from a conviction of their truth.

We now obſerve,

II. That we are to determine, by the light of our own underſtanding, what are ſcripture doctrines; and to receive them upon the authority of a divine teſtimony.

It is by the exerciſe of our mental faculties only, that we can determine what doctrines are contained in the holy oracles; or that the *ſcripture was given by the inſpiration of God*. Having examined the evidences, and admitted the truth of chriſtianity, and aſſented that the ſcriptures do contain a revelation from heaven; it is then for each one to determine, for himſelf, what are the doctrines of revelation.

And, upon the authority of a *divine teſtimony*, we may ſafely believe any doctrine, whether we fully comprehend it or not.

Though it ſhould exceed human comprehenſion, this is no juſt objection againſt the truth of it. And even though it ſhould appear to be contrary to our reaſon, this will not juſtify a diſbelief of it; provided it be ſupported,

evidently, by a divine teſtimony. We are not to reject any doctrine which, evidently, is contained in the *divinely inſpired ſcripture*, upon the authority of our own reaſon; or becauſe we cannot ſee the reaſonableneſs of it. But, "the inſpiration of the Almighty hath given us underſtanding;" and this muſt be convinced, that it is a doctrine of revelation, before it can be received as ſuch, and the truth of it admitted.

It is the proper buſineſs of faith, to reſt aſſured of the truth of whatever God hath revealed in his word; and it is the province of reaſon, to determine what is revealed. As by the light of the underſtanding we diſcover the principles of natural religion; ſo by it we muſt judge of the import of every meſſage from heaven. It is the apparent reaſonableneſs of the thing, which leads a man to embrace any principle in natural religion; but the authority of the divine word ought to eſtabliſh in his mind the truth of any doctrine of revelation.

How far doctrines, which are repugnant to our reaſon, and inconſiſtent, according to our conception, with the moral perfections of God, may weaken, or invalidate the evidence that "the ſcripture is given by inſpiration of God," is a queſtion not now to be diſcuſſed. But, admitting the *divine origin* of the ſcripture, the doctrines of it certainly claim our full belief.

The purity and reaſonableneſs of ſcripture doctrines may very juſtly be conſidered as an internal evidence, that they were *given by inſpiration of God*. And great ſtrength of evi-

dence in ſupport of chriſtianity ariſes from the purity and reaſonableneſs of its doctrines.

The chriſtian religion includes the eſſential principles of natural religion, as a part of its own ſyſtem; and muſt, therefore, admit, and even require, the exerciſe of thoſe powers, by which men gain the knowledge of theſe principles.

But the *peculiar* doctrines of chriſtianity, when we have learnt what they are, by the exerciſe of our own underſtanding upon the word of God, are to be received upon the authority of the divine teſtimony. Our ſentiments in revealed religion cannot be ſafely formed by any other rule than the ſcripture; nor by this in any other way, than the proper exerciſe of our *own* underſtanding.

A rule of judging ſuppoſes a power of judging, and the exertion of that power in the application of the rule. And the right of judging for ourſelves is unalienable; cannot be relinquiſhed without oppoſing the firſt principles of all religion. It is our right and our duty to interpret the ſcripture according to the light we have; and the exerciſe of this right cannot, in juſtice, bring upon us the cenſure and uncharitableneſs of our brethren, who enjoy and improve the ſame natural right and chriſtian liberty.

To underſtand the ſenſe of ſcripture, and to form a juſt idea of the doctrines of it, careful attention is requiſite. Various circumſtances are to be conſidered; the ſituation of the writers, to whom they wrote, the occaſion of their writing, their general deſign at the time, muſt

be taken into view, in order to underſtand the true import of what is written. An acquaintance with Eaſtern cuſtoms, with idiomatical and proverbial expreſſions, with metaphors and figures of ſpeech, and, eſpecially, with the languages in which the ſcriptures were originally written, will greatly aſſiſt in judging of the doctrines therein contained. Beſides, we muſt "compare ſpiritual things with ſpiritual," or one part of ſcripture with another, and with the general deſign of the whole, in order to aſcertain the ſenſe of ſeveral paſſages. In theſe, it is eaſy to ſee, the underſtanding muſt be exerciſed; and every man's ſentiments, if he have any, muſt be the reſult of his own inquiry and judgment.

Full faith is due to every divine teſtimony; but may not be due to a particular interpretation of ſcripture. In the nature of things we muſt be ſatisfied with the interpretation, before we can receive the ſentiment as ſcriptural and juſt. Chriſt and his apoſtles have borne witneſs to the truth of this ſentiment. Jeſus directed the Jews to "ſearch the ſcriptures;" and the writer of the *Acts* of the apoſtles commended the *Bereans* becauſe they ſearched them, to know the truth of what they heard.

We now proceed to ſay,

III. That the "divinely inſpired ſcripture" is an adequate rule of chriſtian faith and practice, independent on all human inventions.

Few will deny the perfection of the ſcriptures, as a rule of faith; though they may not acknowledge the ſufficiency of any man's rea-

ſon, except their own, to underſtand them; and may think their interpretation deſerves as full credit as the divine word.

But the perfection of ſcripture, as a rule of faith and duty, conſiſts in part, at leaſt, in its being adapted to the human underſtanding; and in expreſſing eſſential truths with great clearneſs. It is not a revelation to thoſe who cannot underſtand what it contains. In every inſtance in which it requires human inventions to ſupply a deficiency, it loſes the authority of a divine revelation; unleſs a divine commiſſion be granted to the authors of ſuch inventions: which would be giving an additional revelation that might equally require an explanation.

But, apart from all ſuch conſiderations, St. Paul ſays, "the goſpel, is the power of God unto ſalvation;" and aſſures Timothy that the "holy ſcriptures are able to make him wiſe unto ſalvation;" that they are "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for inſtruction in righteouſneſs;" that is, in few words, they are a complete rule of chriſtian faith and practice. And he expreſſly charged him not to "give heed to fables and commandments of men, which," he ſays, "turn from the truth;" and which, it is very certain, have been a fruitful ſource of error, and have done great injury to the cauſe of religion.

The ſcriptures contain the whole chriſtian ſyſtem; the doctrines to be believed, and the duties to be performed. The principal and moſt eſſential doctrines, it will, perhaps, be generally agreed, are *doctrines of grace*. Theſe, as they are taught in the inſpired word, could not have

been diſcovered by the light of reaſon. The knowledge of them is communicated by revelation. And it muſt be granted, that it was the deſign of God to make them known by the ſcripture, or by the ſpirit of inſpiration, under whoſe influence and guidance the ſcriptnre was given. Theſe doctrines muſt, therefore, be ſuppoſed to be clearly revealed; and not left to be ſpelt out by the uncertain reaſonings of fallible men. The knowledge, or belief of them, does not depend upon long deductions, or ſubtil arguments, invented by "man's wiſdom." As ſome propoſitions are ſelf-evident, ſo certain revealed truths are clear and comprehenſible; and as readily acknowledged, upon the authority of revelation, as any ſelf-evident propoſition is, upon the authority, or by the light, of the human underſtanding.

All the eſſential doctrines of chriſtianity are, perhaps, thus clearly revealed.

They are, at leaſt, I conceive, ſo plainly expreſſed that they may eaſily be known and underſtood by every honeſt inquirer. For the man, therefore, of honeſt integrity and unfeigned ſincerity, a lover of God and of the truth, the ſcripture muſt be a perfect rule of faith and practice.

To deny this, is, in my apprehenſion, to contradict St. Paul and to caſt reproach upon the divine author of revelation. For, to ſuppoſe any truth, the knowledge or belief of which is eſſential to ſalvation, is not ſo clearly revealed that it may be perceived and underſtood by a ſincere inquirer of the moſt moderate capacity, is virtually ſaying, that God hath not adapted

the revelation of his will to the ſtate of mankind; and that the ſcripture is not "able to make us wiſe unto ſalvation."

But what is gained by calling in human inventions to our aid? Theſe are generally fathered upon the ſcripture as their foundation; though, in many inſtances, it muſt be confeſſed, without much appearance of truth. But, if the ſcripture be not a perfect and adequate rule of faith, what claim to perfection has any creed, pretended to be formed by it? If it be an adequate rule of faith for any one man, or body of men, why not for another? Or why ſhould thoſe, who in the ſincerity of their hearts, govern their faith by the ſame rule, be charged with *damnable* hereſy? Is the goodneſs and piety of their hearts, or their faith in revelation, to be determined by any particular conſtruction of the contents of revelation? Or will ſome pretend to immediate inſpiration, and, under this pretence, claim the right of governing the faith of others? St. Paul, though really inſpired and poſſeſſed of the knowledge of the whole chriſtian ſcheme, rejected ſuch an idea: "Not for that we have dominion over your faith." And if he rejected the idea of having dominion over the faith of men, common modeſty, one would think, might induce the ordinary miniſters of the goſpel, and every other chriſtian, to relinquiſh every ſuch claim.

Under the notion, however, of immediate inſpiration, or upon ſome other pretence equally abſurd, many human inventions have been introduced, to ſupply ſome ſuppoſed defect in the inſpired ſcripture. But, far from anſwering

any valuable purpoſe, they have only furniſhed infidels with an argument againſt the chriſtian ſyſtem. They have not preſerved "the unity of faith;" but have interrupted the fellowſhip of chriſtians. Numerous examples might be adduced to confirm the truth of this obſervation. It is daily verified by the conduct of chriſtians of different ſpeculative ſentiments.

But, would all acknowledge the inſpired ſcripture to be an adequate rule of faith, independent on all human inventions, this evil might be prevented; and the diſciples of Chriſt might live together like brethren, and "ſtand faſt in the liberty wherewith he hath made them free."

It will perhaps be ſaid that very few, if any, deny the ſufficiency and perfection of ſcripture, as a rule of faith. All claim ſcripture authority in ſupport of their own ſentiments. But, do they not, virtually, deny that it is an adequate rule for others, when they require them to ſubſcribe a *confeſſion* of faith, which they, or ſome others, have drawn up in their own language? Is the language of the *ſchools*, or of human *creeds*, more perfect and determinate, than the language of ſcripture? If it be, then there muſt be an imperfection in the inſpired writings which does not attend all human compoſitions. But, to admit this is to leſſen the authority of ſcripture; and, conſequently, its influence upon the minds of men. If we once depart from the ſcripture, as a rule of chriſtian faith and duty, "to whom ſhall we go?" Hath any other "the words of eternal life?" Shall we bow to his Holineſs; ſhall we receive the *dogmas* of

Councils and Synods; or ſhall we look and expect to find among ourſelves an infallible Interpreter, to whoſe ſuperior wiſdom we muſt ſacrifice our own underſtanding? The thought is too unreaſonable to be admitted in the preſent enlightened age. Mankind have learnt to pay ſome reſpect to their own underſtanding; and to believe there is ſome truth in St. Paul's declaration that "the ſcriptures are able to make them wiſe unto ſalvation, through faith in Chriſt Jeſus."

Certain it is that they expreſs religious ſentiments with great perſpicuity and energy. Changing the expreſſion often enervates the force, and conceals the beauty, of the ſentiment. As in the eſſential doctrines of chriſtianity, ſo in the language by which they are communicated, there is a beauty and perfection in ſcripture; and he, who is diſpoſed to do the will of God, "ſhall know of the doctrine" whence it is.

A belief in doctrines, which are not clearly expreſſed, nor eaſily known, is not, in my apprehenſion, eſſential to ſalvation; and ought not, therefore, to be deemed neceſſary to the faith and character of a chriſtian: And conſequently, that the want of it cannot, in juſtice, exclude a perſon from the privileges of the goſpel, the communion of the ſaints, nor the charity of his fellow ſervants.

From the ſcriptures we gain the knowledge of many truths which are not expreſſed in plain and direct terms. But this knowledge is acquired by the exerciſe of the rational faculties upon plain and evident truths and making deductions. And it cannot, therefore, be ſo per-

fect, as that which is conveyed directly to the mind by expreſs revelation; nor can the truths which are the object of it, be ſupported by ſo good evidence as thoſe are which are clearly expreſſed in "the words which the Holy Ghoſt teacheth." For mankind are liable to error in their reaſoning upon any ſubject; and the evidence of the truth of any concluſion is leſs in proportion to their liableneſs to error in forming it. This conſideration calls for the exerciſe of modeſty and charity; and it ought to remind us, that, poſſibly our own ſentiments may be erroneous.

But it is, perhaps, true, that many are more tenacious of thoſe ſentiments, and more ſtrenuous to ſupport thoſe doctrines, which are founded upon ſuch uncertain concluſions, drawn from ſome of the darkeſt and moſt doubtful paſſages of ſcripture, than they are to defend thoſe which are clearly expreſſed. And too often they conſider a belief in ſuch doctrines the higheſt evidence, if not the only criterion, by which they can judge of the faith, ſincerity, and goodneſs of any perſon; and even make it a term of communion and ground of their charity. But this is not arrogating a dominion over the faith of others only, in matters of which they have an abſolute and unalienable right to judge for themſelves; but it is in effect leſſening the credit and authority of ſcripture. For, it is requiring men to ſubſcribe, or aſſent, to articles of faith, which, though in their view deducible from ſcripture, they would have the world believe, are more properly expreſſed in the language of their own creed; which is giving the prefer-

ence to the "words which man's wiſdom teacheth." This, contrary to the mind of Chriſt and to the directions of St. Paul, is derogating from the ſcripture, and, perhaps, eſtabliſhing "for doctrines the commandments of men."

As the ſcriptures contain and expreſs every article of the chriſtian faith, a profeſſion of belief in them is the beſt confeſſion of faith that any perſon can make. For he who believes the "ſcripture is given by inſpiration of God," receives all the doctrines of it ſo far as he is able to underſtand what they are; eſpecially if he ſuppoſe they are expreſſed in "words which the Holy Ghoſt teacheth." Changing the mode of expreſſion, and, very probably, the ideas too, by a ſtrong implication charges the ſcripture with imperfection, as a rule of faith. By ſuch change of expreſſion a complex idea may in part be loſt, and the deficiency be ſupplied by ſomething very foreign from the ſenſe and deſign of the ſacred writers.

Theſe conſiderations, ſhould have their due weight upon the mind of every chriſtian; and more eſpecially upon the mind of every miniſter, who ought to remember that he is "ſet for the defence of the goſpel," and that he cannot be true to his truſt, when he receives, or impoſes, for eſſential doctrines of chriſtianity, "the commandments of men."

The uncorrupted word of God, like the ſun, who is ordained to rule by day, ſhould guide our faith and practice. This is a light, which proceeded from "the Father of lights," and gives to men "inſtruction in righteouſneſs." It is wiſely adapted to their feeble capacity,

ſhines into the hearts of thoſe who love God, informs the underſtanding, and ſweetly draws the affections after divine objects. It is the great inſtrument by which the Spirit of God works upon the hearts of ſinners, or builds up the ſaints in holineſs and guides them to happineſs. Human inventions may obſcure, but can never make this light more perfect. This, in connexion with the influences of the Holy Spirit, is able to guide and preſerve us in the path which leads to the heavenly zion. It anſwers the apoſtle's deſcription of it; with many it proves to be "the power of God unto ſalvation;" and it promiſes immortal glory to every obedient believer.

We may now remark,

IV. That it is particularly from the ſcripture that the miniſter is to furniſh himſelf for the important duties of his office.

Good natural abilities, improved by a good education, are indiſpenſably neceſſary to his acquitting himſelf with honour and ſucceſs. A general knowledge of the arts and ſciences is peculiarly uſeful. An acquaintance with human nature, with men and things, gives him great advantage in his work. But religion in his own heart, a love to God and man, muſt be the animating principle and ruling motive of all his labors. Cloſe application to his ſtudy and earneſtneſs in his addreſſes are to evidence his ſincerity and fidelity. But his faithfulneſs will chiefly be diſcovered in his unremitting attention to the ſcripture, as the rule of his own faith, temper, and conduct; and as his directory in every part of miniſterial duty. From

this treaſure of wiſdom and knowledge he is to complete the furniture of his mind. This "is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for inſtruction in righteouſneſs; that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furniſhed unto all goods works." It is from the ſcripture only, as an unerring ſtandard, that he is to learn the peculiar doctrines, hopes, and duties, of chriſtianity. By this he diſcovers the origin of human miſery; and from this learns, that man, though made at firſt after the image of the Creator, hath apoſtatized from God, and thereby obſcured the hopes of nature. In this he ſees the evil of ſin, and its deplorable conſequences, marked out with preciſion. And, while deeply affected with the view of man in his guilt, expoſed to the penalties of the divine law, he beholds, to his inexpreſſible joy, "the Lamb of God, who taketh away the ſin of the world;" and learns that Chriſt, "having made peace by the blood of his croſs," is become "an advocate with the Father" for the guilty children of men; and that God is by him "reconciling the world unto himſelf." Here he finds the terms of the ſinner's final acceptance and ſalvation, and diſcovers the duties and obligations, which reſult from a diſpenſation of grace.

From this treaſure he is to derive the moſt important information; to gain a knowledge of the manifold works and wiſdom of God, of the divine perfections and their harmony in the government of the world, and in the redemption of man.

Here "life and immortality are brought to light;" and here he ſees the religion of nature explained and enforced by divine ſanctions; learns its deficiency, and finds this deficiency happily ſupplied by the wiſdom and grace of God, ſhining with a glorious luſtre in the face of his Son Jeſus Chriſt. From the ſcripture he is to learn the character and offices of the Saviour, the merit of his obedience and ſufferings, and the hopes which are to be built upon his mediation.

The ſcripture contains his commiſſion to "go and teach; baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt;" and all the peculiar doctrines, which, as a miniſter of Chriſt, he muſt preach unto men. It informs him what to preach, how to preach, and how to rule and "behave himſelf in the houſe of God, which is the church of the living God." It contains "the whole counſel of God," which duty and faithfulneſs to the Redeemer, as well as to the ſouls of men, oblige him to declare. Here then he is to look for ſubjects ſuited to the times and ſeaſons, and to the particular ſtate of his flock. "Doctrine, reproof, correction, and inſtruction in righteouſneſs," are to be derived from this pure fountain; and motives collected to engage the attention and command the obedience of the heart.

It may not be improper to hint at ſome of the leading doctrines of the goſpel. Among theſe, according to my apprehenſion, is the doctrine of human depravity, of ſalvation "by grace through faith," of "repentance towards

God," of regeneration, of the agency of the ſpirit in the converſion of a ſinner, of the reſurrection of the dead, of a future judgment, of the eternal glory and felicity of the ſaints, and of the puniſhment of the finally impenitent. Theſe, and many others calculated to intereſt the feelings, raiſe the hopes, and arreſt the attention of mankind, are taught in the holy oracles.

Whence, but from the ſcripture, can the miniſter learn theſe doctrines, or underſtand the deſign and duties of his office? And how illy does he anſwer his character, if he do not imbibe the ſpirit, and preach the truths, of the goſpel. This is the meaſure and rule of his duty; and the perfection of his miniſterial character is a ſtrict conformity to it. If he conform to this rule he will "in doctrine ſhew uncorruptneſs, gravity, ſincerity;" and uſe "ſound ſpeech, which cannot be condemned," but will promote the edification of his hearers.

Moreover, the ſcripture affords the miniſter the nobleſt examples to excite his zeal and fidelity in the arduous work to which he hath devoted himſelf; and the moſt gracious promiſes to comfort and ſupport him in the difficulties and trials peculiar to his ſtation and ſacred employment.

Would he know how he ought to feel intereſted and engaged to advance the glory of God and the ſalvation of ſinners; let him look into the hiſtory of Chriſt, the purchaſer of our redemption, and ſee him dying on the accurſed tree, that he might do honour to his and our God, and expiate human guilt. And if he

think this an example, which it is neither poſſible, nor expected, that he ſhould copy; let him turn his thoughts to St. Paul, who could ſay, "neither count I my life dear unto myſelf, ſo that I might finiſh my courſe with joy, and the miniſtry which I have received of the Lord Jeſus." If he feel human weakneſs, and that he is inſufficient for the great work, let him attend to the kind promiſe of Chriſt to his miniſters, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

As a conſtant motive to be diligent and faithful, let him remember, it is promiſed, that "they that be wiſe ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteouſneſs, as the ſtars for ever and ever."

Though his labors ſhould not be attended with deſired ſucceſs, let him encourage himſelf with the aſſurance that "though Iſrael be not gathered, yet he ſhall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and his God will be his ſtrengh;" that, if faithful, though unſucceſsful, he ſhall receive a crown of rejoicing at the ſecond appearing of the Lord Jeſus.

Thus does the ſcripture furniſh the man of God unto all good works. It therefore demands his ſerious attention and daily ſtudy. Let this be his directory, and he will be "a workman that needeth not to be aſhamed, rightly dividing the word," and happily fulfilling "the miniſtry which he hath received from the Lord."

Omitting particular inferences from what hath been ſaid,

Let me rely on the candor of my fathers and brethren in the miniſtry, who are "ſet for the

defence of the goſpel," while I felicitate them and myſelf, upon the reflection that we have in our hands an unerring ſtandard of religious truth, which not only teaches us knowledge, and points out our duty, but affords the nobleſt encouragement and higheſt motives to be faithful in it. Happy are the eyes that ſee this heavenly light! Let us rejoice in it, and endeavour to reflect the pureſt rays of it upon the minds of our reſpective hearers.

By the inſpired ſcripture let us try our own ſentiments, and receive nothing for doctrines of chriſtianity, which will not bear the teſt; how much ſoever it may be ſanctified by great names, or eccleſiaſtical decrees. Let us be equally careful to "call no man father upon the earth," and not to allow ourſelves to be "called maſters; for one is our maſter, even Chriſt."

In matters of faith let us neither yield ſubjection, nor claim dominion. I humbly conceive we are not required to do the one, nor permitted to do the other. Let us acknowledge no other rule of faith, than that, which Chriſt and his apoſtles have given us.

And may we feel that "the word of God is quick and powerful;" that it arreſts our attention and inſpires us with zeal for the divine glory, and the deliverance of ſouls captivated by ſin. While we pay all due reſpect to the holy ſcripture, and ſtudy to know what it contains, let us encourage others to examine for themſelves, and extend towards them our charity, though they ſhould differ from us in the interpretation of ſome parts of the divine word.

If ſincere, all will agree in the eſſentials, and ought always to agree in affection and chriſtian fellowſhip. In our life and converſation, as well as in the particular duties of our office, let us exhibit the ſpirit and power of the goſpel.

And may the God whom we ſerve quicken us by his grace, crown our labours with ſucceſs, and give us many ſeals of our miniſtry, which ſhall be our crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord.

My young friend, at whoſe requeſt I have taken this part on the preſent ſolemn and joyful occaſion, demands my particular attention.

You, *dear Sir*, are now entering upon an honorable, but arduous work; a work in which the glory of God, the intereſt of the Redeemer's kingdom, and the ſalvation of men, are particularly concerned.

On your faithfulneſs and diligence in this ſacred work will depend the approbation of God and your future crown of rejoicing.

You have heard the character and qualifications of a goſpel miniſter briefly hinted. My knowledge of you, from long acquaintance, forbids me to entertain a doubt of the purity of your motives and intentions. Your conſcience, I am perſuaded, now bears witneſs to the ſincerity of your heart, and fixed reſolution to be faithful; as all, who have the happineſs of an acquaintance with you, muſt to your ability to teach.

When providence gave to me the direction of your early ſtudies, and the inſpection of your general deportment, the ſerioufneſs I then obſerved in you was to me a preſage of your one

day entering, with your whole heart, upon the work of the miniſtry. You do not diſappoint my expectation. You now, I truſt, ſincerely devote yourſelf and all your talents to the ſacred work. I moſt ſincerely rejoice in your fair proſpect of comfort and uſefulneſs. The united voice of this large and reſpectable church and ſociety hath called you to be over them in the Lord. You now take the overſight of them, "not by conſtraint, but willingly." And you will, I truſt, "watch, as they that muſt give account" to the great Head of the church. All your abilities muſt be devoted to the honor and ſervice of your Lord, and to the good of this people.

To the holy ſcripture you muſt look for direction; and to the grace of God for quickening and ſupport.

It is a pleaſing reflection, "that from a child thou haſt known the holy ſcriptures," and appeared to be governed by the divine maxims, which they contain. Make them the rule of your faith, of your preaching, and other miniſterial duty. Be "mighty in the ſcriptures," that you may come to this people "in the fulneſs of the bleſſing of the goſpel of Chriſt."

You will not reject any doctrine of the inſpired ſcripture, becauſe you may not be able fully to comprehend it; but will readily believe "the record which God hath given of his Son," and examine the lively oracles "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for inſtruction in righteouſneſs."

As a faithful ſervant of Chriſt, concerned for the "ſheep and the lambs" of the flock, you

will "declare the whole counsel of God," and be careful to feed them with "the sincere milk of the word." You will avoid matters "of doubtful disputation, foolish and unlearned questions, which minister strife, rather than godly edifying;" and will be serious, practical, and evangelical, in your preaching. And you will endeavour to bring the great truths of the gospel home to the hearts and consciences of your hearers, and to enforce them by your own example. Precepts teach, but examples enforce the truth, and influence the life.

You will consider it an honour to your christian character and profession, to manifest candor and charity towards all your fellow-servants, who exhibit the life and temper of christians, though in some things they should differ from you in sentiment. "Charity is the bond of perfectness."

You will not be governed by the pride of opinion, but always keep your mind open to light and conviction; and never be ashamed of any of the truths of the gospel, though they should be unpopular with the multitude. Respect your own understanding, knowing that it was given by the *inspiration of the Almighty*, and cannot innocently be disregarded, or controlled by the authority of others in religious sentiments.

Let prudence, sincerity, and faithfulness, mark your character. Be zealous in the noble cause in which you now engage. Preserve, if possible, the affection of this respectable people, and give them full proof, that you love them, not in word only, but in truth and sincerity.

Mutual eſteem and affection will lighten your burden and make your ſervice delightful.

If in a view of the arduous work before you, and of the difficulties that attend the faithful performance of it, and under the concern you muſt feel at entering upon it, you are ready to ſay, "who is ſufficient for theſe things?" remember your maſter hath ſaid: "My grace is ſufficient for thee." "Be ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."

Set the examples of the ſuffering Jeſus before you, and have an eye to "the recompenſe of reward," that you may be encouraged faithfully to fulfil your miniſtry. Anticipate the day, when thoſe, whom you may turn to righteouſneſs, ſhall, in the preſence of an aſſembled world, own the riches of God's goodneſs to them, in giving you to be their ſpiritual guide; and with you enter into that *reſt, which remaineth to the people of God.*

Think no ſervice too great for you to perform, to promote the glory of God, to build up Chriſt's kingdom in this place, and to ſave the ſouls of this people. Plead for them at the throne of grace, faithfully deliver to them the word of God, and, by your own example, lead them in the way of righteouſneſs.

And may God grant you a long, a proſperous, and a ſucceſsful miniſtry.

May you be a man, whom Chriſt, the glorious Head of the church, ſhall delight to honor in this golden candleſtick. And when he ſhall come to collect his ſaints, may you, and the people of your charge, be received into his everlaſting kingdom.

The chriſtian church and ſociety in this place now claim my reſpectful attention.

Friends beloved in the Lord,

We rejoice with you on this auſpicious day, that the great Head of the church is giving you a miniſter of his goſpel, who is able to feed you with knowledge, and who, we believe, will be faithful to his Lord, and to you.

We remember, and would mention to your honor, the chriſtian temper you manifeſted, when, by mutual conſent, the paſtoral relation between you and your late *worthy miniſter*,* was diſſolved.

It is to us a pleaſing reflection, that you did then and do ſtill hold him in reputation and honor among you. He hath ever had an uninterrupted ſhare in our affection and eſteem; and now hath our ſincere reſpect, and cordial wiſhes for his health, proſperity, and happineſs.

Your ſteady zeal and unremitted exertions to have the goſpel reſettled among you, your great unanimity in the choice of your *Paſtor elect*, and your generous proviſion for his comfortable ſupport, riſe into view on this joyful occaſion, afford peculiar ſatisfaction, and preſage his eminent uſefulneſs among you, and your future proſperity, edification, and comfort.

Behold the man of your choice, this day, devoting himſelf, his time, and his talents, to the ſervice of God, and of your ſouls.

* The Rev. Moſes Everett. He was ordained *Paſtor* of the church and ſociety in Dorcheſter, September 28, 1774. By reaſon of ill health he was induced to aſk a diſmiſſion; to which the church and people, after expreſſing their kindneſs to him and duly weighing the matter, conſented. The buſineſs was completed and the relation diſſolved January 14, 1793. He now lives among them a private gentleman and chriſtian much reſpected and eſteemed.

Receive him as an *aſcenſion gift*, and "eſteem him highly in love for his work's ſake." His abilities are unqueſtionable; his character is irreproachable; his virtues have been conſpicuous; his temper and deportment are agreeable; and by literary improvements he hath diſtinguiſhed himſelf. From long and particular acquaintance with him I am led to believe, that he is actuated by pure and worthy motives in entering into the work of the miniſtry.

You have heard whence he is to collect the "doctrine, reproof, correction, and inſtruction in righteouſneſs," which he is to preach and adminiſter, viz. from the *inſpired ſcripture*. Conſider, therefore, that he brings to you the meſſages of heaven; and "take heed how you hear." Examine and judge for yourſelves. He, I preſume, will not claim dominion over your faith; but ſtrive to be a "helper of your joy." Seriouſly attend upon his miniſtry, and endeavour to profit under it. Treat him with candor, tenderneſs, and affection. Do not increaſe, but as far as poſſible lighten his burden.

The labors and duties of a miniſter, among this large people, muſt be great. But you, my chriſtian friends, may make them ſupportable by your candor and generous thoughtfulneſs of the extenſive field, in which he is called to employ his time. Do not expect more from him, than is in his power to perform. Remember that his ſtudy will engroſs a conſiderable portion of his time; and let him ſee that you are pleaſed with his giving himſelf to ſtudy, to reading, and to meditation. In theſe he will labor for your profiting.

I am perſuaded you will find in him an agreeable ſeriouſneſs, a laudable zeal for the glory of God, a ſincere deſire to promote your happineſs, and a heart full of tenderneſs. He will feel for you, and ſympathize with you, in all your diſtreſſes; and you, I hope, will manifeſt the kindeſt feelings and affections to him.

I truſt that by the help of divine grace he will be faithful. Much depends on you whether he ſhall be ſucceſsful. Do not deprive him of this joy, the greateſt and moſt animating a ſincere and good miniſter can have, by any neglect on your part. Give him no occaſion to complain, that he "labours in vain." Receive the truth in the love of it, and let "your profiting appear unto all men." By this you will encourage as well as comfort your miniſter. Let him always have an intereſt in your fervent prayers and devout ſupplications at the throne of grace, and in your undiſſembled love.

May your love and his be mutual; may your kind offices and his be reciprocal; may your joy and his be laſting. And long may he be a rich bleſſing to you; and may your children riſe up to bleſs this ſervant of the Lord, and to glorify God for giving him to be their ſpiritual father and guide. And, when theſe humbler forms of worſhip ſhall be done away, may you all, with your beloved paſtor, join "the general aſſembly and church of the firſt born, which is written in heaven," for ever to celebrate the praiſes of God, and the riches of redeeming grace.

I ſhall now cloſe with a few words to this numerous and reſpectable aſſembly.

You have heard, my friends, that the doctrines which your reſpective miniſters are bound to preach and to teach, were revealed from heaven; that the *ſcripture*, which contains them, *is given by inſpiration of God*. Can it then be a matter of indifference, whether you hear and attend to them or not? Meſſages from heaven to mortals on earth muſt not only be worthy of their attention, but demand their ſerious regard.

Did Chriſt come into the world, to reveal his Father's will, and to die upon the croſs that he might redeem your ſouls; and are you under no obligation to receive his goſpel, and honor him by your faith and obedience? This cannot be. Gratitude demands a different return. Beſides, your own ſouls are deeply intereſted in the meſſages delivered from the word of God. Be perſuaded, therefore, my friends, to attend to them with ſerioufneſs. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God;" and by faith men are juſtified in the ſight of God. "Take heed, therefore, how ye hear." "By the fooliſhneſs of preaching" ſome are ſaved; made wiſe, willing, and obedient to the goſpel ofChriſt, and for ever happy in the favour of God.

Let me entreat you, therefore, to attend to the means of grace, to honor, and delight in, a preached goſpel. In this way you will encourage the hearts, and ſtrenghen the hands, of your miniſters; and promote your own edification and comfort.

May you all be faithful to God, and to your own ſouls; and may you "taſte that the Lord

is gracious, desire the sincere milk of the word, grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," and be fruitful in works of righteousness, which shall be to "the praise and glory of God the Father."

Thus may we all be happy here in the love and favor of God, and in the approving testimony of our own consciences. And, when the Lord Jesus shall descend from "the right hand of the Majesty on high," to judge and award men "according to the deeds done in the body," may we, with exulting hearts, hear his voice pronouncing to each of us: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

AMEN.

THE

CHARGE,

GIVEN BY THE

REV. NATHANIEL ROBBINS,

OF *MILTON.*

WHEREAS it hath pleaſed the only living and true God, by whoſe perfect providence the world is governed, who is the univerſal Proprietor and Lord, to raiſe up and qualify you, Mr. Thaddeus Maſon Harris, (in our apprehenſion) for the work of the Goſpel Miniſtry, and to incline and call you thereto; and ſince you are, in divine providence, invited, this church of Chriſt and the congregation of the Lord, uſually meeting for public worſhip in this houſe, to the work of the goſpel miniſtry among them: We, who now lay our hands on you, do, in the name of the glorious Head of the church, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and by a power derived from him, ſeparate you, Mr. Thaddeus Maſon Harris, to this ſacred ſervice, and ordain you a paſtor of the church and congregation in Dorcheſter, which we now commit to your paſtoral care.

And we charge you, as in the preſence of the great God, the holy angels, and witneſſes here

preſent, that you carefully attend to this ſacred ſervice in which you have now engaged: that you ſo watch for ſouls as to be able one day to give an account to the Judge of quick and dead with joy and not with grief.

Feed the flock of God, of which the Holy Ghoſt hath made you an overſeer, both the ſheep and the lambs of it, with ſpiritual food. And, in order hereunto, you muſt preach the word; be inſtant in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long ſuffering.

As you are called to be a teacher, you are to endeavour to teach this people all things which Chriſt has commanded, and as his ambaſſador. If you can, ſatisfy this people that you have the intereſt of his kingdom at heart. Be concerned to approve yourſelf to God, a workman that needeth not to be aſhamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. Shun not to declare the whole counſel of God through fear of men. Contend earneſtly for the faith once delivered to the ſaints. Let no man deſpiſe your youth.

And, as you are now authorized to adminiſter the ſeals of the covenant, baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper, ſo we charge you in the adminiſtration of them to adhere cloſely to the inſtitution: to adminiſter them to all proper ſubjects, and to no others.

And, as you now have power to ordain and ſeparate others to the work of the goſpel miniſtry when called thereto, ſo, with reſpect to the exerciſe of this power, we charge you to commit this truſt to faithful men only, to ſuch as are able to teach others; not to novices, not

to ignorant and unlearned men, leſt, being puffed up with pride, they fall into the condemnation of the devil.

And, as you now have to manage that eccleſiaſtical diſcipline which Chriſt has appointed in his church for edification and not for deſtruction, ſo we charge you to do it with fidelity to your great Maſter in heaven. Keep thyſelf pure from the blood of all men. Mr. Harris, you muſt be a man of prayer; and an example to the flock, in word, in converſation, in charity, in ſpirit, in faith and purity. It is evidently of importance that you be a pattern of good works in order to your anſwering the great end of the miniſtry. Take heed that you give no offence, that the miniſtry be not blamed. So take heed to thyſelf, and to the manner of interpreting and inculcating the truths and rules of the goſpel, that ſo you may ſave yourſelf and them that hear you. Be concerned at all times to be inſtrumental in advancing the glory of God and the intereſts of the Redeemer's kingdom in your own heart and in the hearts of others. If poſſible, prevail with ſinners to comply with the methods of divine grace that they may finally obtain immortal felicity.

And, if you duly obſerve this charge, when Chriſt, who is our life ſhall appear you ſhall appear with him, and ſhine with diſtinguiſhed luſtre in the firmament of glory.

A M E N.

THE

RIGHT HAND of *FELLOWSHIP*,

BY THE

REVEREND MR. HAVEN,

OF *DEDHAM.*

Men, Brethren and Fathers, hearken.

THAT "God is love, and that he who dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him," is the declaration of an inſpired apoſtle. Innumerable are the diſplays of God's love to the children of men, but none more clear and bright than the gift of his own Son, to redeem and ſave us. The religion which he introduced, greatly reſembles its benevolent Author; it proclaims "peace on earth and good will to men." Our love to one another is the diſtinguiſhing mark by which our real acquaintance with this religion is to be evinced. "By this ſhall men know that ye are my diſciples if ye have love one to another."

May it not be expected that the miniſters of this religion, ſhould ſhine with diſtinguiſhed luſtre in this amiable grace? Is not this one among many things, in which they ſhould be "examples to the flock of Chriſt?" How

many endearing conſiderations muſt daily ariſe in their minds to cement their affections, not only to thoſe who are their brethren, in the faith and hope of the goſpel, but particularly to thoſe who are their brethren in office, and their "fellow-helpers to the truth!" How ſhould their hearts be knit together in love! And how gladly ſhould they embrace every method, and every opportunity to expreſs their kind and ſympathetic feelings to each other!

It is not neceſſary to determine whether *giving each other the hand*, is a natural expreſſion of friendſhip and affection, or whether long uſage hath ſtrongly ſtamped this meaning and ſignificancy upon it. In this view, do we not daily obſerve it in others, and practiſe it ourſelves, in civil intercourſe with friends.

And this ſignificant rite, we find, was adopted into religion, in the early days of chriſtianity. "When *James*, *Cephas*, and *John*, who ſeemed to be pillars in the church of Chriſt, perceived the grace of God in *Paul* and *Barnabas*, they gave unto them the right hand of fellowſhip."

The congregational churches, in our land, ambitious of approaching as near as may be to the model of the truly primitive and apoſtolic church, have ever accompanied the ſolemn ordination of a paſtor, with this pleaſing rite.

Accordingly, being authorized, by long uſage and ancient example, and deſignated to this agreeable ſervice, by the eccleſiaſtical council here preſent, I give unto you, my brother, THIS RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP. Hereby I expreſs my own, and the affectionate feelings of the Elders of the churches here convened to-

wards you. We hereby teſtify our ſatisfaction in your qualifications, for the great work to which you have now been ſolemnly ſeparated. We bid you welcome into the goſpel vineyard, as our "companion and fellow laborer in the kingdom and patience of Jeſus Chriſt." We promiſe you our ready advice and brotherly aſſiſtance, whenever you may have occaſion for them. Of this my hand is a pledge.

Permit me, at the ſame time, to remind you, that this action, like the obligations it expreſſes, is mutual. I have received your hand, which we view as a token of your friendſhip and affection to us; and an engagement, on your part, to perform all thoſe kind and brotherly offices towards us, of which we may at any time ſtand in need.

The honor of our divine Maſter; the ſucceſs of his ſervice, in our hands; the intereſt of the churches confided to our care; and our own ſupport under the temptations and diſcouragements which attend our ſacred employment; all render mutual love and affection between the miniſters of Chriſt highly neceſſary. May this brotherly love continue and increaſe! May nothing diſſolve or weaken this happy union!

And now, dear brother, may the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with your ſpirits! May God prolong your life, and render it precious to the people of your charge. May "the ear that hears you bleſs you, and the eye that ſees you bear witneſs to you." May "he who holdeth the ſtars in his right hand," ſupport and guide

you, through a long and ſhining courſe of perſonal ſanctity, and public uſefulneſs; and having made you inſtrumental of turning many of your people to righteouſneſs, advance you "to ſhine as the brightneſs of the firmament, and as a ſtar for ever and ever."

Beloved friends and brethren of the chriſtian church and ſociety, in this town, we, the elders and meſſengers of your ſiſter churches, whom you have invited hither, on the preſent ſolemn and joyful occaſion, "ſalute you much in the Lord." We affectionately recognize you, as a valuable member of the body of Chriſt, our common head; and as becomes this endearing relation, we feel ourſelves united to you, in the bonds of cordial love and fellowſhip.

We take a pleaſing and ſympathetic part in the ſatisfaction which this day's proſpect affords you. We rejoice in the happy unanimity with which you have choſen our worthy and beloved young brother, to take the paſtoral care and charge of you. With religious pleaſure we have joined with you, in the ſolemnity of his induction into the work of the goſpel miniſtry. Behold the man whom you have ſeen, this day, devoting himſelf, his time, and talents, to the ſervice of your ſouls, with all the marks of tender affection to you, and of humble obedience to the great Shepherd, appointing him, here "to feed his ſheep—to feed his lambs."

May mutual affection, between you and him, continue and increaſe, and ever be accompanied with the moſt ſubſtantial evidences of the ſucceſs of his labors among you. Long may you,

and the children yet to be born, rejoice in the light of his doctrine and pious converſation! And may you and they be his joy and crown of rejoicing, in the preſence of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, at his coming.

A M E N.

B P L. Binder.
SEP 8 1899